

EXTENSIBLE AUTHENTICATION SYSTEM AND METHOD

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 This application is related to co-pending U.S. Patent Application entitled
"Parameter Verification in an Authentication System and Method", accorded
serial number 10/060,620, filed on even date herewith under attorney docket
number 10012155-1, and is now U.S. Patent No. 7,107,615,

TECHNICAL FIELD

10 The present invention is generally related to the field of authentication and,
more particularly, is related to an extensible authentication system and method.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 Multifunction peripherals have become more and more common in the
workplace and in the home. Typical multifunction peripherals often combine the
functions of printing, faxing, scanning, and copying into a single device or system.
20 Previously, offices may have had to purchase a printer for computers to print, a
facsimile machine to transmit and receive faxes, a scanner to scan documents, and
a copy machine to make copies. Now all of these functions are being combined in
a single device to save workspace and provide significant cost savings and
efficiency. In addition, some multifunction peripherals may provide digital sending
25 capability that enables users to scan a document into digital form and then send the
resulting digital document.

30 While a single multifunction peripheral may provide many different functions,
it may not be the case that all individuals should have access to all of the
capabilities thereof. In some cases, specific individuals may be provided with
access to specific functions using some sort of security or authentication routine
that limits access to specific functions to specified users. However, as more and
more different functions are integrated into multifunction peripherals or any other
machine that limits access to specific functions in a similar manner, the security